THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, the 7th March 1963.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at three of the clock, Mr. Chairman (THE HON. DR P. V. CHERIAN) in the Chair.

I.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

Sri Meenakshi Amman temple, Madurai

45 *Q.*—DR. A. SREENIVASAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether marriages are permitted to be performed within the premises of Sri Meenakshi Amman temple, Madurai, if so, the rituals permitted in this connection;

(*b*) whether there is any breach or violation very recently by any party or parties; and

(*c*) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken thereon?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : (*a*) Yes. Marriages are being permitted to be performed within the premises of Sri Meenakshiamman temple, Madurai, after collecting a fee of Rs. 5 per marriage. The bride and bridegroom will stand in the Artha Mantapam of Sri Amman Shrine. The Tirumangalyam will be placed by the Bhattar at the feet of the goddess and the Archanai Performed. After Deeparathanai to the goddess, the Tirumangalyam is taken by the Bhattar and handed over to the bridegroom for being tied. After exchange of garlands between the bride and bridegroom, the couple make a pradakshanam in the sannadhi. After the above rituals, the parties to the marriage and other guests participating in the marriage sit in any convenient place in the premises of the temple for distribution of sandal and betelnuts, etc.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) Does not arise.

SRI M. SUBBIAH CHETTIAR : May I know, Sir, whether records are maintained in the temple for these marriages celebrated there?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Records are maintained for the collection of the fees of Rs. 5.

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SRI A. GAJAPATHY NAYAGAR: Do they perform sapthapathi in the temple, Sir?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: I do not think there is sapthapathi unless the pradakshinam is construed to be sapthapathi.

திரு க. அன்பழகன்: தலைவர் அவர்களே, இத்தகைய திருமணங்கள் மற்ற கோவில்களிலும் நடைபெற்றுக்கொண்டிருக்கின்றனவா? அல்லது சிலவற்றில் நடத்தலாம், சிலவற்றில் நடத்தக்கூடாது என்ற விதியிருக்கிறதா?

கனம் திரு. எம். பக்தவத்சலம்: எந்தக் கோயிலிலும் நடத்தக் கூடாது என்று விதி எதுவும் இல்லை. சில கோவில்களில் நடத்தப் படுகின்றது. அவற்றில் பரம்பரை பரம்பரையாக நடைபெற்று வருகின்றது. எல்லாக் கோவில்களிலும் இவை நடைபெற வசதி அளிக்கவேண்டுமென்று கோவில் நிர்வாகிகளை வற்புறுத்திக் கொண்டிருக்கிறேன்.

Midday meals

46 *Q*.—SRI S. K. SAMBANDHAN: Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state how and when payment is made to the respective elementary schools towards the Government's contribution for midday meals?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: The grant is in advance for each quarter for four quarters in a year-ending with 31st March, 30th June, 30th September and 31st December. The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Midday Meal Committee will have to present claims to the Deputy Inspector of Schools concerned for the quarterly advance grant giving the number of working days in the quarter, the number of pupils selected for provision of school meals and his estimate of the Government grant due for the purpose. The grant is paid by the Panchayat Union Commissioner from out of the Panchayat Union (Education) Fund on receipt of the bills passed by the Deputy Inspectors of Schools and District Educational Officers. Such payments by the Panchayat Union are compensated by a specific school meals grant to the panchayat unions from the State Funds.

SRI S. K. SAMBANDHAN: Sir, the Hon. Minister said that grants were usually paid in advance. But in practice, they are paid only after three or six months to the headmasters of the schools or the Chairmen of the Committees. So, will the Government at least enquire into this?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: Sir, that was the complaint of the hon. Member. But the instructions are that it must be paid in advance. If the hon. Member would refer to me any specific instance, I shall look into it.